

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 03387 101016Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 /020 W
-----058658 101022Z /20

P R 100800Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1044

UNCLAS TUNIS 3387

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BTRA BEXP TS
SUBJ: FOREIGN BUYER PROGRAM: DELEGATION OF HOUSEWARE BUYERS

REF: (A) USDOC 08218 (B) TUNIS 3306

1. DELEGATION, HEADED BY MR. MOHAMED HATTAB DABBECH, LEAVES TUNIS FOR WASHINGTON VIA PARIS BY TWA FLIGHT 891 ARRIVING AT DULLES AIRPORT THURSDAY, MAY 11 AT 3:30 P.M. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE COMMERCE GREETING MEMBERS AT AIRPORT AND MAKING RESERVATIONS FOR THREE SINGLES AT CONVENIENTLY-LOCATED, GOOD QUALITY HOTEL.

2. IN REFTEL B, WE ERRONEOUSLY PUT MR. DABBECH AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR, WHILE HE IS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE TUNISIAN OFFICE OF TRADE. WE ALSO STATED THAT OCT PRESIDENT SAID OTHER TWO MEMBERS SPEAK ENGLISH FLUENTLY. DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. KOOLI, WE FOUND THAT HE HAD DIFFICULTY SPEAKING ENGLISH. WE COULD NOT GET IN TOUCH WITH MR. ACHOUR, THE THIRD MEMBER WHO IS NOW IN PARIS, THEREFORE WE ARE UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS ENGLISH IS GOOD ENOUGH TO INTERPRET FOR REST OF DELEGATION. WE THEREFORE REQUEST COMMERCE ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING INTERPRETER FOR DELEGATION IN SPITE OF IO FAM GUIDANCE TO THE CONTRARY.

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IF THIS TRIP IS TO BE EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP TO RESTORE PROMOTION OF AMERICAN CONSUMER GOODS HELD HERE IN 1976, IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ALL ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE (INCLUDING INTERPRETING SERVICES) BE AFFORDED THIS MISSION.

3. MR. KOOLI TOLD US THAT THE IDEA OF ORGAN ZING THIS BUYING MISSION AROSE WHEN PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA

WAS INAUGURATING A NEW "OAGASIN GENERAL" STORE AT KASSERINE, IN CENTRAL TUNISIA. THE FOCAL POINT OF THE DISPLAY WAS US-MADE GLASSWARE. MR. NOUIRA'S ATTENTION WAS ATTRACTED BY A PUNCH SET CONSISTING OF A LARGE BOWL SURROUNDED BY 36 GLASSES. HE ASKED THE PRICE, WHICH WAS ELEVEN DINARS (\$27). HE WAS SO IMPRESSED THAT HE GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. LASRAM, THEN MINISTER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY, TO IMPORT MORE GOODS FROM THE US AND REDUCE TRADE DEFICIT WITH EUROPE.

4. MESSRS DEBBECH AND KOOLI VISITED EMBASSY MAY 9 AND EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR COMMERCE AND EMBASSY'S SUPPORT. THEY SAID THEY ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR FIRST VISIT TO THE US AND THAT THEY ARE CONFIDENT IT WILL RESULT IN LONG-TERM MUTUALLY FRUITFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM AND US SUPPLIERS.
MULCAHY

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